KVK in Goa

416. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have sanctioned a Krishi Vigyan Kendra in the South Goa district;

(b) if so, whether the Kendra has started functioning; and

(c) the details of activities proposed to be undertaken by the said Kendra?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The Indian Council of Agricultural Research has sanctioned a Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) in South Goa district under the administrative control of the Government of Goa. Necessary funds have also been released in February, 2005. The Kendra has not become functional as the staff has to be provided by the State Government.

(c) The details of activities of KVK include on-farm trial to identify the location specificity of agricultural technology under various farming systems, frontline demonstration to establish its production potential on the farmers' fields, training of farmers to update their knowledge and skill, and training of extension personnel to orient them in the frontier areas of technology development.

Purchase of cotton from farmers

417. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to purchase more and more cotton from the farmers;

(b) if so, the details of cotton purchased by the CCI during the current year in each State;

(c) the details of actual production of cotton in each State; and

(d) how Government are protecting the interests of cotton farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Government has been purchasing cotton from the farmers, under price support operation through its designated agency namely, Cotton Corporation of India (CCI).

(b) During the current cotton season 2005-06 (till 27-7-2006), the CCI purchased 62.91 lakh quintals of kapas (equivalent to 12.52 lakh bales) in the cotton growing States. Details are as follows:

State	Qty. in Quintals
Punjab	265266
Haryana	21794
Rajasthan	349301
Gujarat	1424748
Maharashtra	1457146
Madhya Pradesh	577615
Andhra Pradesh	1817375
Karnataka	345227
Orissa	32047
TOTAL :	6290719

(c) As per the Fourth Advance Estimates for 2005-06, State-wise details of cotton production are as follows:

Quantity in lakh bales 170 Kgs. each

State	Quantity
Punjab	23.95
Haryana	14.99
Rajasthan	8.80
Gujarat	73.80
Maharashtra	36.26
Madhya Pradesh	7.45
Andhra Pradesh	21.81
Karnataka	4.80
Tamil Nadu	2.13
Others	1.73
TOTAL :	195.72

(d) In order to ensure remunerative prices to the farmers of cotton in the country, Government notifies Minimum Support Prices (MSP) on the basis of recommendations made by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). The CCI has been purchasing entire Fair Average Quality (FAQ) grade cotton offered by the cotton farmers in various market yards. To avoid distress sale by farmers, the CCI has also been purchasing kapas three stages below FAQ grade with suitable price adjustment. Further, Government of India has also nominated National Agricultural Cooperative Federation of India Limited (NAFED) as the second agency for procurement of cotton under MSP.

Chemicals used in ripening of mangoes

418. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that harmful chemicals like calcium carbide are being used to artificially ripen mangoes;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that no action is taken by the concerned authorities to prevent such a practice; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action proposed to be taken by Government to check such hazardous practice?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Under PFA Rules, 1955 use of calcium carbide gas for ripening of fruits is prohibited.

(c) and (d) The PFA Act, 1954 and PFA Rules, 1955 are implemented by the State/UT Governments, who takes samples of food items and take action under the provisions of the PFA Act, in case the samples are found not confirming to the standard or there is a violation of a rules. The State Governments are advised from time to keep vigil for checking food adulteration. To check the hazard of calcium carbide, an alternative method for repening of fruits have been developed by ICAR. The fruits are exposed to ethylene gas at a concentration of 10 to 100 ppm (0.001 to 0.01%) in airtight rooms for 24 hrs at 20-25C and 90-95 per cent RH. The fruits may also be treated with ethrel/ethephon in hot